

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 DLOS-03 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3312

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION USBERLIN

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 19356

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GW

SUBJECT: CALL ON EGON BAHR: PARTY MATTERS; NORTH-
SOUTH RELATIONS; BERLIN

SUMMARY: ALTHOUGH PROTESTING THAT HE WOULD PREFER TO
STAY AS MINISTER OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION, BAHR SEEMED
PLEASED AT PROSPECT THAT HE WOULD BECOME MANAGER OF SPD.
HE ANTICIPATES THAT HE WILL CONTINUE TO BE ACTIVE IN
FOREIGN AFFAIRS, ALTHOUGH HE WILL CONCENTRATE PRIMARILY
ON PARTY MATTERS, AT LEAST FOR ONE YEAR. HE WILL FOCUS
IN PARTICULAR ON ATTEMPT TO BRING YOUNG LEFTIST ELEMENTS
OF SPD BACK TOWARDS CENTER. ON NORTH-SOUTH RELATIONS,
BAHR EXPRESSED OPPOSITION TO COMMON FUND, ALTHOUGH HE
THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO COMBINE THIS WITH US
IDEA OF INVESTMENT BANK. HE ALSO BELIEVES THAT IT
MIGHT BE DESIRABLE FOR US AND OTHER COUNTRIES, IN-
CLUDING FRG, TO INCREASE LEVELS OF BILATERAL AID. RE-
GARDING BERLIN, BAHR WAS STRONGLY NEGATIVE ON THE
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VAN WELL ARTICLE. HE THOUGHT MANY PROBLEMS CONCERNING

BERLIN WERE PETTY AND SHOULD BE SUBJECT TO RESOLUTION;
HOWEVER, TOO MANY LAWYERS WERE INVOLVED ON BOTH
SIDES AND THERE IS DANGER THAT COLLECTION OF MINOR
MATTERS COULD ESCALATE INTO MAJOR PROBLEM. END SUMMARY

1. I PAID MY FIRST CALL ON EGON BAHR, WHOM I HAVE
KNOWN PREVIOUSLY, ON AFTERNOON OF NOVEMBER 15. PRESS
HAS BEEN FULL OF WORD THAT BAHR HAS BEEN SELECTED TO
BECOME MANAGER OF SPD. WHEN I CONGRATULATED HIM ON
THIS, BAHR SAID IT MEANT TAKING ON A DIFFICULT JOB AND
HE REGRETTED LEAVING MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION.
HE STRESSED HE WOULD ACCEPT PARTY MANAGER POSITION ONLY
IN EVENT HE RECEIVES LARGE MAJORITY VOTE BY PARTY. HE
EXPECTED THAT "UNFORTUNATELY" SUCH VOTE WOULD BE FORTH-
COMING. DESPITE EXPRESSIONS OF REGRET, BAHR SEEMED
PLEASED AT CONFIDENCE IN HIM MANIFESTED BY NOMINATION
TO PARTY MANAGER SLOT.

2. BAHR SAID THAT OVERALL SPD WAS IN FAIRLY GOOD
SHAPE ORGANIZATIONALLY, ALTHOUGH SOME STREAMLINING AND
POLISHING HERE AND THERE WOULD BE NECESSARY. HE SAW AS
ONE OF HIS MAIN JOBS THE EFFORT TO ATTRACT YOUNG,
LEFTIST ELEMENTS BACK TOWARDS THE MAIN STREAM OF THE
PARTY. BAHR THOUGHT THAT, DUE TO THE PRESSURES OF
HOLDING OFFICE, SENIOR SPD OFFICIALS IN RECENT YEARS
HAVE DEVOTED INSUFFICIENT TIME TO REASONING AND DIS-
CUSSING ISSUES WITH THE YOUNGER ELEMENTS. HE RECALLED
RECENT INTERNAL SPD SQUABBLES IN MUNICH, WHEN BRANDT
HAD TRIED TO REASON WITH THE LEFTISTS BY ADOPTING A
SOOTHING TONE; SCHMIDT, IN HIS TURN, HAD SHOUTED AT
THEM. HOWEVER, NEITHER APPROACH HAD BEEN SUCCESSFUL
AND CONSIDERABLE WORK WILL BE NECESSARY TO CORRECT THE
SITUATION.

3. BAHR SAID THAT IT HAD BEEN AGREED THAT IN HIS NEW
CAPACITY HE WOULD PARTICIPATE IN ALL COALITION MEETINGS
IN THE FUTURE AND HE ADDED WITH EVIDENT SATISFACTION
THAT THIS WOULD GIVE HIM BOTH INFORMATION AND INFLUENCE.
HE ALSO WILL CONTINUE TO BE ENGAGED IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS.
BAHR SAID HE HAD POSED THIS AS A CONDITION OF HIS
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ACCEPTANCE OF PARTY MANAGER JOB AND THAT BOTH BRANDT
AND SCHMIDT HAD AGREED AT ONCE. BAHR FEELS HE WILL
HAVE TO SPEND ABOUT ONE YEAR IN GETTING THE PARTY
ORGANIZATION IN HAND; THEREAFTER, HE WILL HAVE MORE
TIME TO DEVOTE TO FOREIGN AFFAIRS. HE WILL BE PARTIC-
ULARLY INTERESTED, HE SAID, IN RELATIONS WITH SOCIALIST
PARTIES IN EUROPE AS WELL AS WITH THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY
IN THE US. HE WILL ALSO BE CONCERNED WITH HOW TO DEAL

WITH "EUROCOMMUNISM". BAHR SAID THAT EUROCOMMUNISM IS A DIFFICULT AND QUITE DANGEROUS DEVELOPMENT FOR THE SPD; IF IT IS EVER SAID THAT WESTERN COMMUNIST PARTIES HAVE ACQUIRED POWER BECAUSE OF SPD SUPPORT, THIS WOULD MEAN A SHARP LOSS OF VOTES IN THE FRG FOR THE SPD. BAHR SAID HE IS OBVIOUSLY CONCERNED TO AVOID THIS AND

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HIS IMPLICATION WAS THAT HE WOULD TAKE A HARD LINE ON ANY SUGGESTIONS FOR COOPERATION WITH WESTERN COMMUNIST PARTIES.

4. IN A BRIEF REFERENCE TO CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE COALITION PARTIES IN THE FRG, BAHR SAID HE WAS CONFIDENT THEY WOULD BE SUCCESSFUL AND THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT WOULD BE FORMED WITHOUT ANY UNDUE DIFFICULTIES. THE MAIN ISSUES FOR DECISION RELATED TO FAIRLY COMPLICATED ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL QUESTIONS HAVING TO DO WITH SOCIAL SECURITY AND PENSION FUNDS.

5. SPEAKING ON NORTH-SOUTH MATTERS, BAHR SAID HE HAD ALWAYS OPPOSED IDEA OF A COMMON FUND FOR RAW MATERIALS AND THE CREATION OF A NEW INTERNATIONAL BUREAUCRACY. HE WAS FAVORABLY INCLINED TOWARDS THE US SUGGESTION OF A BANK AND SPECULATED WHETHER IT MIGHT SOMEHOW BE POSSIBLE TO COMBINE THE ELEMENTS OF A COMMON FUND - WHICH THE THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES SEEMED TO INSIST ON - WITH A BANK OF THE TYPE PROPOSED BY THE US. BAHR ALSO SPOKE FAVOR-
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ABLY OF THE ADVANTAGES OF BILATERAL AID PROGRAMS AND THOUGHT THAT THE US AND OTHER DONOR COUNTRIES, INCLUDING THE FRG, MIGHT FIND THAT HIGHER AID LEVELS WOULD BE A CHEAPER AND MORE EFFECTIVE WAY OF DEALING WITH THIRD WORLD PROBLEMS THAN A COMMON FUND. BAHR EXPECTED THAT PRESIDENT-ELECT CARTER WOULD HAVE TO GIVE SPECIAL STUDY TO NORTH-SOUTH MATTERS AND HE FELT IT LIKELY THAT NEW ADMINISTRATION WOULD FIND IT DESIRABLE TO MOVE IN DIRECTION OF INCREASED AID LEVELS.

6. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUERIES CONCERNING BERLIN, BAHR REVIEWED THE BACKGROUND OF THE QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENT AND THE CONSIDERABLE ACHIEVEMENTS REPRESENTED BY THE AGREEMENT. HE THOUGHT THAT MANY OF THE CURRENT PROBLEMS VIS-A-VIS THESoviETS CONCERNING LEGAL REPRESENTATION, INSTITUTIONS IN WEST BERLIN, AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN REALITY WERE QUITE PETTY AND NOT OF GREAT MOMENT. MOST OF THEM COULD BE SOLVED INDIVIDUALLY WITHOUT TOO MUCH DIFFICULTY. HOWEVER, IF THEY ARE ALL BUNCHED TOGETHER, THE PROBLEM SEEMS BIGGER AND THERE IS A RISK THAT A CRISIS COULD DEVELOP. BAHR FELT THAT TOO MANY LAWYERS WERE AT WORK ON BOTH SIDES, AND THAT THEY WERE MAKING RESOLUTION OF THE QUESTIONS MORE DIFFICULT. IN THIS CONTEXT, BAHR DEPLORED THE VAN WELL ARTICLE ABOUT BERLIN. HE THOUGHT ITS PUBLICATION HAD BEEN A MISTAKE AND HE WAS PERSUADED THAT THESoviETS WOULD SEE THE ARTICLE AS A DELIBERATE CHALLENGE TO THEIR POSITION AND TO THEIR PRESTIGE. A SHARP REACTION FROM THE SOVIETS COULD BE EXPECTED. BAHR SAID HE FELT SOMETHING SHOULD BE DONE IN ORDER TO COUNTER THE VAN WELL ARTICLE. THERE MIGHT BE SOME MERIT, HE THOUGHT, IN WRITING ANOTHER ARTICLE WHICH WOULD TAKE A MORE BALANCED LINE, BUT HE HAD NOT COME TO ANY CONCLUSION ON THIS SCORE AS YET. BAHR ALSO INDICATED THAT HE WAS NOT IN FAVOR OF PLACING NEW FEDERAL INSTITUTIONS IN BERLIN.

7. BAHR WAS EXTREMELY CORDIAL DURING OUR TALK AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT WE COULD KEEP IN TOUCH AFTER HE HAS ASSUMED HIS NEW POSITION IN THE PARTY. I ASSURED HIM THAT I WOULD WISH TO DO SO.

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